

earth day prayer service

our

*kinship*



with all

beings

April 22, 2014

“The mountains and rivers and all living things, the sky and its sun and moon and clouds all constitute a healing, sustaining, sacred presence for humans.”

— *Evening Thoughts: Reflecting on Earth as Sacred Community* by Thomas Berry, p. 135

## Invitation to prayer

Look up at the sky —  
The heavens so blue, the sun so radiant,  
The clouds so playful, the soaring raptors,  
The meadows in bloom, the woodland creatures,  
The rivers singing their way to the sea,  
Wolf song on the land, whale song in the sea,  
Celebration everywhere, wild, riotous,  
Immense as a monsoon lifting an ocean of joy,  
Spilling it down over the landscape,  
Drenching us all with a deluge of delight  
As we open our arms and rush toward each other,  
You and I and all of us,  
Moved by that vast compassionate Presence  
That brings all things together in intimate Celebration,  
Celebration that is the universe itself.

— *adapted from “Every Being Has Rights” by Thomas Berry*

**Opening song**     *choose appropriate music, if desired*

## Introduction

**Leader:** There is a longing in us to return to our native place, to meet once again with our kin in the Earth community. We are being called home to a wider world of life, of wilderness, of spontaneity, the world of wind and rain, of oak and maple and pineland forests, of the eagle and the chickadee, the wolf and the bear, and the many other beings — all our relations with whom we share this Earth. Though ours is a time of increasing habitat destruction, species extinction, and sprawling concrete metropolises, more and more people are seeking companionship and meaning beyond the boundaries of humanity. We begin to remember our larger family and we find that they have remained loyal to our ancient bond.

— *“Prayer” by Joseph Bruchac in Life Prayers from Around the World, p. 39*

**Reader 1:** Turn to the animals  
and let them teach you;  
the birds of the air will tell you the truth.  
Listen to the plants of Earth and learn from them;  
let the fish become your teachers.  
In God’s hand is the soul of every living thing;  
in God’s hand is the breath of all humankind.

— *Job 12:7-8, 10*

*Brief pause for reflection*

**Reader 2:** As humans, we are born of the Earth, nourished by Earth, healed by Earth. The natural world tells us: I will feed you, I will clothe you, I will heal you.... I offer you a communion with the divine; I offer you gifts you can exchange with one another. I offer you flowers whereby you can express your reverence for the divine and your love for each other.

In the vastness of the sea, in the snow-covered mountains, in the rivers flowing through the valleys, in the serenity of the landscape, and in the foreboding of the great storms that sweep across the land, in all these experiences I offer you inspiration for your music, your art, your dance.

— Evening Thoughts: Reflecting on Earth as Sacred Community by *Thomas Berry*, p. 139

**Reflection** *instrumental background music with nature sounds, if desired*

- What is your experience of kinship within the Earth community? What does that kinship ask of us — individually and as a congregation?
- In what ways has creation gifted you? What has it taught you? What has it revealed about the Divine?

*Sharing, if desired*

**Litany** *We Live in Relation to All Things*

**Leader:** We live in relation to all things,  
all things live within us.

**Response:** We rejoice in all life.

**Leader:** We live by the sun,  
we move with the stars.

**Response:** We rejoice in all life.

**Leader:** We eat from Earth,  
we drink from the rain,  
we breathe from the air.

**Response:** We rejoice in all life.

**Leader:** We share with all other creatures,  
we have strength through their gifts.

**Response:** We rejoice in all life.

**Leader:** We depend on the forests and the rivers,  
we have knowledge through their secrets.

**Response:** We rejoice in all life.

**Leader:** We have the privilege of seeing and understanding,  
we have the responsibility of caring and protecting,  
we have the joy of celebrating.

**Response:** We rejoice in all life.

**All:** We are full of the grace of creation.  
We are grateful, we are grateful.  
We rejoice in all life.

— “*We Live in Relation to All Things*” edited by *Anne Rowthorn*

**Closing prayer**     *together*

Mysterious, gracious Power of Love,  
your energy permeates the Universe,  
binding all that exists in profound kinship,  
weaving a sacred web of relation.

Deepen our awareness of this interconnection,  
this *interbeing*;  
help us probe its meaning for our lives.  
May we learn to revere all we encounter as your  
self-revelation  
and respond with awe, gratitude and love.

Amen.

**Closing song**     *choose appropriate music, if desired*

**References**

- Berry, Thomas. "Every Being Has Rights." Lecture, Twenty-third Annual E.F. Schumacher Lectures, Stockbridge, Mass., October 2003.
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- "We Live in Relation to All Things." In *Earth and All the Stars*, edited by Anne Rowthorn. Novato, Calif.: New World Library, 2000. Originally published in *EASI Interfaith Celebration of the Cosmic Story* (Washington, D.C., 1993).

**Cover Art**

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The spirit of human solidarity and kinship with all life is strengthened when we live with reverence for the mystery of being, gratitude for the gift of life, and humility regarding the human place in nature.

— *from The Earth Charter*



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